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ABSTRACT

This paper describes activities now being undertaken in the Pacific Northwest to develop international awareness. Oregon and Washington have major ports where wheat, lumber, and steel move in and out in increasing quantities. In the state of Oregon alone, international trade increased from 1.2 billion dollars in 1970 to 2.8 billion in 1975 to 6.4 billion in 1980. Because the very livelihood of the Pacific Northwest depends on trade, the Commerce Department, the Chamber of Commerce, and the trade associations are encouraging cooperative efforts in international trade. A survey of 237 businesses in Oregon indicated a need for cross-cultural and language training at both the community college and university levels. Many community colleges in the Pacific Northwest have implemented international education programs. Examples are described in the report. Outreach efforts of the community colleges have been aided by the Pacific Northwest International/Intercultural Education Consortium. Two years old, the Consortium consists of 29 member institutions, including community colleges, four-year institutions, and community organizations with interests in international education. To date its primary efforts have been in bringing global perspectives to the curricula, expanding overseas programs, improving services to foreign students, and nurturing international awareness in the community. The paper concludes with a description of the activities of the Oregon Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. (Author/RM)

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A COOPERATIVE EFFORT IN NURTURING INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS

BY

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A COOPERATIVE EFFORT IN NURTURING
INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS

Mexico's President José López Portillo recently observed of U.S.-Mexican relations that "there are no isolated problems; everything is part of everything else." Albert Einstein, in Notes on Pacifism, commented that "peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding." And a quote from the Constitution of UNESCO reads, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed."

When any of us is asked what first comes to our minds when we contemplate the words international awareness, depending on the experiences of our lives, we would each give a different answer. Some of us would answer in idealistic or possibly utopian terms of peace and understanding, others in realistic or even pessimistic terms of the future by the year 2,000, others in terms of cross-cultural understanding for a better business profit, and still others for the need for national defense. Whatever the reasons, in a time when reports show that the United States is grossly lacking in international awareness, voices from all sectors are seeking at least to view the problem and at most to take the necessary steps to create understanding which will, in the long run, nurture the melting pot of ideas in a cooperative effort to bring the United States closer to the rest of the world in a positive sense.

Thus, today I would like to address my comments to efforts now being undertaken in the Pacific Northwest to create an ambiance where international awareness can be developed and nurtured. But first I would like to overview briefly the necessary components in any community for this interest to become viable. For one thing, in terms of the business community, the understanding must take place that in order to compete effectively in the world market, there must be at least a superficial knowledge of the cultures of trading partners and that there should ideally be bi-culturally trained business professionals who can successfully interact with these cultures with which they are doing business.

Secondly, colleges and universities should acknowledge the need to train their students to reflect the interests of the communities in which they will eventually be employed, and at the same time, must train them for an interdependent world.

Thirdly, a cooperative effort must be established via consortia approaches, which, in time of budget cuts, allow the sharing and developing of certain programs, training of faculty, and sharing of information. Thus, for each institution, the wheel does not have to be re-invented everytime. Fourth, an interested political body which encourages the activities of the colleges and universities must be developed. Such a group might research and define the needs of the business and academic communities, recommend on policy approaches, and be influential enough to see to it that these recommendations are adopted. Fifth, the linkages between the education and business sectors should be coordinated with community groups such as the World Affairs Council, the United Nations associations, the League of Women Voters, etc., to enhance the awareness of the community to international issues and parallel those of the academic and business sectors.

In the Pacific Northwest these efforts have, in the past several years, become a reality. In a sense, however, even though the cooperation is very much there, I would certainly not say that we have found the perfect solutions; but we are working toward that end. Thus, the nation's rising interest in global education and a recognition of the growing importance of international trade in the Pacific Northwest economy converged in the past several years to create a cooperative effort in nurturing international awareness.

Oregon and Washington have major ports where wheat, lumber and steel move in and out in increasing quantities. These states are representative of coastal states which have direct economic ties to international trade in both imports and exports. For example, 25% of Oregon's gross product is dependent on foreign trade. Consequently,

Oregon has made great progress in recent years toward increasing its international trade, and its industry has made a strong commitment to continue developing Portland as a leading West coast port. In the State of Oregon alone, international trade increased from 1.2 billion dollars in 1970 to 2.8 billion in 1975 to 6.4 billion in 1980. Today, 900 companies in Oregon are involved in importing and exporting. The lumber companies, which for years have resisted cutting lumber to the metric dimensions for overseas export, are now realizing that if they are going to survive, they must turn to foreign markets for their business. During this coming May, a trade mission involving the major lumber companies in Oregon will be traveling to Japan to negotiate exporting agreements. Over the past five years, the Pacific Northwest Regional Commission, made up of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, has encouraged the regional promotion of trade. The Department of Agriculture is coordinating its efforts with the Commission, and Oregon is often singled out as the exemplary state which promotes cooperation between the Commerce Department and state government and business. Thus, since the very livelihood of the Pacific Northwest depends on trade, the Commerce Department, the Chamber of Commerce and the trade associations are encouraging cooperative efforts in international trade.

The results, from a need assessment survey for a two year program in International Business taken in Oregon of 237 area businesses, indicated that almost 80% of the firms believe that such a need exists and that cross-cultural and language training is equally valuable at both the community college and university levels. When asked if they would hire those trained in international studies, 85% reported that within the next five years, they would be seeking to employ these persons specifically. When asked what course of study they would recommend, 80% answered international business courses including foreign language and cross-cultural training. This survey and my daily discussions with business professionals throughout the State of Oregon indicate that the business community is well aware "that there are

10,000 English-speaking Japanese business representatives on assignment in the United States. There are fewer than 900 American counterparts in Japan--and only a handful of those have a working knowledge of Japanese."[1]

It is only recently that the academic community has come to realize that training students to think internationally must begin at all levels of education, and that it can no longer be the domain of a few graduate students at elite universities. Interestingly enough, the resistance to this movement is continuing, especially where funding and government grants are concerned. Nevertheless, by the very nature of world events, this way of thinking is well on its way to becoming extinct. For instance, community colleges throughout the nation have shown that they are in a position of implementing international studies curricula that are of high quality and that not only is international education for an interdependent world imperative, but it works in the classroom as well.

In the Pacific Northwest several examples of community college efforts in implementing international awareness on their campuses have given the impetus to other community colleges throughout the nation to do the same, and have set the example for the future of international studies in community colleges. These examples include Mt. Hood Community College, North Seattle Community College and Fort Steilacoom Community College. Since I have been directly involved in implementing the program at Mt. Hood Community College, I would like to address my comments to what this community college has accomplished in the past six years. Study abroad programs for vocational/technical and liberal arts students were successfully implemented in Europe, Latin America and Asia. Faculty exchanges to Europe and Asia were implemented in order to sensitize the faculty to a better cross-cultural understanding. Two years ago, after receiving a Title 601 grant from the Office of Education, four degree programs in international education were instituted: one Associate of Arts degree in International Studies for Liberal Arts students and three Associate degree programs in International Studies for Vocational/Technical students, the latter consisting of degrees in Journalism, Business Management Import/Export, and Early

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[1]U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies: Background Paper and Studies (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, 1979), p. 7.

Childhood Education. All of the degree programs have areas of concentration in Asian, Latin American, or European studies. The curriculum in these degree programs includes cross-cultural understanding courses in which students are encouraged to understand their own backgrounds and those of other ethnic groups in American society, to transcend ethnocentricism and to appreciate and respect other cultures. Secondly, the curriculum deals with issues of interdependence and global survival; that is, it teaches students about the interdependence of all peoples, the skills that will be needed for human survival, the critical issues facing the world, and the need for a global community. These include food, overpopulation, energy, the environment and the moral dilemmas and choices which we will have to make in a world of the "haves and the have nots." Thirdly, the curriculum includes courses which pertain to various disciplines mentioned earlier, but which are viewed from an international perspective. The program also involves training of faculty, an extensive community outreach program to sensitize the community to international concerns, and a quality control system of evaluations and careful monitoring of courses.

To date, the program has been successful, but we are still revising our degree programs and our classes, and will continue to do so for the next several years. In the last two years, we have helped several colleges and universities implement similar programs on their campuses. The expertise that we developed on our campus has been extremely valuable throughout the Northwest to educators and business professionals, several of the latter of whom have attended our community outreach programs, our classes, and especially our courses in Japanese and Chinese language training.

Yet, our outreach efforts would not have been as successful had it not been for the development of a consortium which has already received national praise and acknowledgement for its efforts in enhancing cooperation and developing international awareness among its member institutions in Alaska, Washington, Oregon and British

Columbia. It is an ambitious consortium with an unwieldy name--The Pacific Northwest International/Intercultural Education Consortium. In a sense, the name describes both the complexity of purpose and the diversity of its membership. Although only two years old, it already consists of 29 member institutions made up of community colleges, four year institutions--both public and private, and community organizations with interests in international education, such as the World Affairs Councils of Oregon and Washington. The major goal of the consortium, as the name implies, is to create in citizens a greater awareness and respect of the world as an interdependent global community, and it is toward that goal that the member institutions are concentrating their efforts. In order to achieve the goal of the consortium, and to meet the varied needs of the member institutions, its primary efforts have been in bringing global perspectives to the curricula, expanding overseas programs, improving services to foreign students, creating cooperative work experience for students and nurturing international awareness in the community. To date, the consortium achieved:

1. A successful application for the Citizen Education Grant which funded the consortium with over $80,000 to train faculty in international studies.

2. An established International Cooperative Education Summer program with 100 positions open for the summer of 1981.

3. Procurement of a priceless Chinese Art exhibit for a year to be shared by member institutions.

4. Establishment of guidelines for coordinating 25 consortium-sponsored study abroad programs.

The goals of the consortium for the next year include:

1. A Title 601, Office of Education grant application which, if funded, will allow the consortium to implement programs among its member institutions to internationalize the undergraduate curriculum.

2. A Citizen Education Grant application for training teachers on the K-12 levels to internationalize their courses.

3. An Office of Education grant application to develop international cooperative education.

The possibilities of sharing resources are endless. The purpose of the Consortium is to make available the avenues for cooperation among institutions while at the same time assisting its members to develop individually those programs which they feel they can successfully accomplish on their own. Thus, this consortium, with the unwieldy name, has already become a unique experiment entitled "Cooperation in the Northwest."

The increase of foreign trade, the development of sophisticated international programs in the two- and four-year colleges and universities, the cooperative efforts of the consortium mentioned above and the President's Report on Foreign Languages and International Studies have combined to create the impetus for legislative action in the State of Oregon. For example, beginning with the 1984 graduating class, every Oregon public high school student will be required to take a year of Global Studies, and every high school must offer foreign language instruction. On July 28, 1980, the Governor of the State of Oregon signed an executive order to create the Oregon Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. Oregon became the first state to take such action. Thus, Oregon will serve as a model for the nation in developing a comprehensive state approach to strengthening foreign language instruction and knowledge of global issues. This Commission defined its tasks as follows:

1. Conduct and distribute throughout Oregon an inventory of available resources and programs related to foreign language and international studies.

2. Expand the awareness of Oregonians of their role as producers, consumers, and citizens in an increasingly interdependent world.

3. Assess the need and opportunities for those trained in foreign language and international studies and increase the number of Oregon citizens professionally prepared for careers in business, education, government, media, and other enterprises reflecting Oregon's interdependence.

4. Strengthen the curriculum in foreign languages, international studies, and international career preparation in Oregon schools and colleges.

5. Review existing statutes, rules and policies, and recommend appropriate changes, including new legislation.

6. Implement the Presidential Commission Report as it relates to Oregonians.

The expertise, dedication and interest of the members of the Commission will result in a report which will reflect the needs of the state and will enhance citizen, faculty and student awareness of an increasingly interdependent world. I do not believe that this prediction is a mere crystal ball musing, for in terms of what has occurred to date, there is no way that we can turn the clock back. Those of us involved in the policy recommendations of the Commission are taking every step to make recommendations which will reflect the sound academic programs which are already in existence. These programs have worked for us, and it is only a matter of time before other academic institutions embark on the same route. Nevertheless, these recommendations need to be carefully followed, and it must be assured, through constant vigilance, that they are adopted and become policy.

The Commission is not alone in its interests throughout the State of Oregon. International group organizations such as the World Affairs Council, the Pacific Northwest Regional Trade Commission, the Oregon China Council, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, International Trade Division, to mention a few examples, also have similar interests. In developing international studies programs throughout the state, every effort has been made to develop and maintain links which have worked to the benefit of all groups concerned. For example, in developing the academic programs and in seeking legislation, academic institutions have received help from these groups. Furthermore, we cooperated on citizen outreach programs, faculty training and the application of grants. Scholars in Asian, Latin American and African studies are

often invited to speak to these groups. We cooperated in sharing costs with these organizations in order to bring these scholars to our campuses for faculty training and community outreach programs. Most importantly, it is essential to recognize that what we do on our campuses does not remain in isolation. When ties exist throughout the community and international studies become part of the entire picture, citizens are willing to support them and even fight for them legislatively.

An example of the culmination of our efforts in creating such bonds throughout the community can be seen in a conference which will take place in Portland this coming May. It is a conference to promote international awareness within business and education. The program will focus on the present achievements and future needs of international cooperation in the private and public sectors. This conference, initiated in cooperation with the Pacific Northwest International/Intercultural Education Consortium, the World Affairs Council of Oregon, Mt. Hood Community College and the business community, will provide an opportunity for dialogue so that professionals in business and education may consider approaches to a cooperative effort in expanding international awareness in the Pacific Northwest. Issues such as "Training for the Cross-Culutral Mind," "Business and The Transfer of Technology Across Cultures," "International Exchanges," "Curriculum Development," "Linkages Among the Pacific Rim Countries," "Doing Business in China," "Human Rights," and "Looking Toward the Year 2,000" will be discussed by both the business and educational communities. Such dialogue is essential for both sectors, since, as President Portillo observed, "there are no isolated problems; everything is part of everything else." If we are going to enhance international awareness, that end can be achieved only by a cooperative effort. Through that cooperation, we may better understand what we ourselves want and believe, then we can work effectively toward the goal of education for an interdependent world.

All of this may seem rather elementary to us; however, in view of result after result citing the lack of awareness of American citizens to international issues, it is imperative that attempts be made to nurture awareness. America, either through ignorance, fear or apathy, has not been willing to deal with the "strange customs" of others. Ethnocentrism permeates American history, and there is too much talk recently of "civilized" and "uncivilized" worlds. I am not advocating that we in the Pacific Northwest have erased such blatant dichotomies, but what I am advocating is that we are attempting to do so through the avenue of least resistance--which is cooperation. We are nurturing this so long awaited child in our culture called international sensitivity. We can only hope that once the child matures, our job will have come to fruition. In the meantime, what is required in the United States today is compassion, sensitivity and cultural understanding; we need a sound and proportionate sense of power and how to use it; we need an equally accurate appreciation of the intangibles and the relationship of larger principles to self-interest; and we need a sense of history. For those who doubt such possibilities, then it might be in the effort itself that we could concentrate, for as Dr. Ernest Boyer, Former United States Commissioner of Education, said:

> Education that teaches us to celebrate rather than condemn cultural diversity; to understand rather than undermine differing traditions and beliefs; to respect rather than revile mankind's infinite societal variations - such education may not be enough to preserve man's precarious perch on planet Earth, but surely the educational effort must be made.